



## GOVCOMMS PODCAST

EP#161: LINKEDIN MASTERY,  
STORYTELLING SECRETS AND THE  
KEY TO SOCIAL MEDIA SUCCESS

- WITH STANLEY HENRY  
TRANSCRIPT

# Transcript

Stanley Henry:

Don't think that people care what you have to say is important? I think if you have that mindset that people don't really care what I have to say, then it's a little bit liberating and free actually, because now you can stand back and go, "If they don't really care about what I have to say, what do they care about? What is it that they want to listen to? And what is the story that they want to hear?" And then you can go out and find out, "This cohort of people that I want to talk to, what are they listening to? What are they reading? What are they watching? And why do they care and give their attention to that place? What is it about that story that's being told over there that they care about?" And then, if you can just swallow your pride and realise that they don't care about you, but they care about this, well, how do I then take my story and weep it with the things that they do care about?

Voiceover:

Welcome to the GovComms podcast, bringing you the latest insights and innovations from experts and thought leaders around the globe in government communication. Now, here is your host, David Pembroke.

David Pembroke:

Hello everyone, and welcome once again to GovComms, a podcast about the function of communication in government and the public sector. My name is David Pembroke. Thanks for joining me.

As we begin today, I'd like to acknowledge the Ngūnawal people and pay my respects to their elders past, present, and emerging, and recognise the ongoing contribution they make to the life of this city and region. I'd also like to pay my respects to all First Nations people who may be listening to the podcast today.

For those of you who have been paying attention to this podcast over the past eight years, you fully understand our interest and focus on content and its capacity to explain policy, programme, services, and regulation to citizens and stakeholders. Indeed, contentgroup has been wandering these fields since 1997, and we're always on the lookout for people who are doing new and interesting things in this space.

Well, a company that has caught the attention of one of our team here, Aelyn Silva at contentgroup, is the New Zealand-based New-York-inspired agency, The Attention Seekers. Aelyn came up to me the other day and she said, "Pemby, you have to have a look at these guys and what they are doing, it is just amazing." And indeed, the approach that they're taking, the way that they're going about their content creation process is certainly interesting. In the attention economy where every brand, every not-for-profit, sporting team, government department, agency, or individual are competing for a share of a person's most valuable asset, which is their time and their attention. You do have to do things well.

Well, Stanley Henry is the founder and CEO of The Attention Seeker, and he joins me from their studios in Auckland, New Zealand. Stanley, welcome to GovComms.

Stanley Henry:

Thanks for having me, David. Good to be here. What an intro. I've got to live up to that now.

David Pembroke:

So listen, Stanley, I think we often like to introduce people and bring them into the story, and I think your backstory is particularly interesting as the democratisation of the factors of media and production become everybody's, not just those who have either been to university or worked in media, and everyone can have a go. If you could start us through your story and your journey from the streets of South Auckland all the way through to where you are today now as the founder and CEO of The Attention Seeker.

Stanley Henry:

Well, I'll take you back, I grew up in South Auckland in New Zealand. It's a pretty low socio part of town in Auckland. I had a typical life growing up in that space, but there wasn't a lot of options. Then, I went to university, but I wasn't the best student at university. I was a good student academically, I just thought there was more interesting things in life, so I went travelling and I actually ended up in Australia for a good part of that time. I fell into the hospitality world.

One thing led to another, and 12 years later I ended up running hotels and food and beverage operations across the world, in London, Japan, Australia. I learned how to run a business doing hotels, and I became a general manager of hotels from that point.

I learned a lot about personal branding and marketing in that space because in a hotel, there's not a lot of margin, actually for spending on marketing, you've got to really grind for every little piece you can. As a general manager, you've got to try stuff, you've got to really try things. The head office has all the budget, and as an individual level, as a hotel, you really got to do what you can with what you've got. So I learned a lot generally.

And then, in 2017 and 2018, I started to really heavily get into LinkedIn and I had a coach who taught us about how to use it. I used it for hotels. I found out that it was quite successful and we generated a lot of business for hotels, which then gave me the confidence that I could finally go out on my own and do my own business because I'd always struggled with, how do I go from that zero to one client? How do I start this process of finding business? I really didn't know how to do it. I'd run in hotels and restaurants, and so you'd always work for people with a lot of capital and a lot of money who could then open up a building. It's a very different prospect to someone going out and starting their own service based business.

Fast-forward to 2019, I finally had the courage to quit my job, my career, give up the high rise apartment in Melbourne, move back to New Zealand, live with family, start a business from scratch, somehow convinced my Aussie wife to move to New Zealand with me. That was a struggle, I'll tell you that much. But we got here eventually. Eventually, one thing after the other, I just kept building my brand on LinkedIn. I just kept putting out posts and I kept on meeting people. I started to get a lot of people wanting to meet me for coffee, go into networking events. I did that pretty solid for six months. I was averaging about four or five coffee meetups with people every day through LinkedIn. I was going to three or four networking events every night. I just thought I need to meet people and get to know them. I did that solid for six months.

Then lockdown happened, March, 2020. We all ended up in lockdown. At that point in time, it was pretty tough, that first two weeks of lockdown, I mean, no one knew what was happening, least of all me. I had thought the hotel market was decimated. I thought, "Oh, I can't even go back to my old career. What am I going to do?"

And then eventually, slowly but surely, people started reaching out saying, "Stan, all this stuff you're doing on LinkedIn, this content and this meetups and things, I need help doing that. I can't get out and meet customers. I need some way of building my brand online." That was the genesis of everything, people are willing to pay me to help them do it. They said, "Oh, look, you're pretty good at this thing. Here's some cash. See what we can do." One thing led to another and that exploded in 2020, and a lot of people came to me asking for help with LinkedIn.

The entire way along this journey since that point to now, all I've done is gone, "Here's a customer, who can I hire with skill sets that can help increase our capabilities as a business and do more?" One thing led to another, we had copywriters join the team. We had graphic design, we had videographers, video editors.

We then eventually hired Jony, who's been a big part of our business with teaching us how shortform video platforms work. We were no longer just doing LinkedIn, we're now in TikTok. Our TikTok exploded. Within six

months was that 200 something thousand followers. Just one thing led to another, people started asking us to do TikTok, their Instagram, YouTube.

Until this point in time, we're essentially just a full service advertising agency at this point. The old saying we like to say is, "You died a hero, you live long enough to become the villain." Well, we've become the villain that we were trying to counsel in the first instance and now way that we are the agency now, there's 31 of us in the team. We got most of them here in Auckland, some that are distributed. We're slowly starting to build an office in New York. A couple of us are heading back in July to put down the roots in New York and it's been a wild ride.

David Pembroke:

Sounds it. Who was the first person who paid you for your services?

Stanley Henry:

This guy called Jason, he's a good friend of mine still. He was a finance broker for commercial vehicles and he needed to find people to lease vehicles. He couldn't get out. He used to go around and just knock on people's doors and get to know people and network. He's like, "Stan, I need some help. I need to still finance these vehicles." He was the first person who finally paid me. I still remember, it was 11th of May, 2020, the money hit my account. I still remember it very clearly because it was the moment where I realised, "I've got something here we can move forward." And then the next day I hired my dad.

David Pembroke:

Just going back to it, it's interesting, isn't it? I reflect on the skills that you picked up through your hospitality career. What did you learn through hospitality that's helped you to become such an effective storyteller?

Stanley Henry:

I think story is something I've always been interested in. I think humans are good storytellers by nature. I think it's just an inherent thing we have as humans. I just don't think we look at it that way.

I've always think I've been very good at story... I've always read a lot. I've always been a very avid reader of both fiction and nonfiction. But what hospitality taught me actually in business more than anything is how to run a business and how to lead people. I think the business acumen I picked up and how to lead a large team is what I still carry through to today, which is what allowed us to build.

But to be honest, inside my team, I'm definitely the worst storyteller. I'm definitely the person who is learning from my team every day. What I did and as part of what I learned from hospitality is I hired good people to be around me, and those are the people who are very effective storytellers. I think what I'm very good at is understanding how a story links to a commercial output. If you take this story and you sell it this way, this is what will happen as a result of that. I'm very good at understanding those connections from a business acumen point of view and then leading the team to be able to tell that story.

I understand story and I think everyone intuitively does understand story, but I think what I was really good at was actually identifying other people who could tell stories really well as a very deliberate skill.

David Pembroke:

Now, you mentioned LinkedIn and the investment that you made early in LinkedIn. What were you trying to achieve there? Was it around your personal brand or was it to support business outcomes for the hospitality businesses you were working in?

Stanley Henry:

It was definitely to support business outcomes. In hospitality, I was just trying to find a different way to do something. Everyone else was all trying to attack Facebook and Instagram and Google, and else.

I've always had this idea that there's opportunities in the opposite. If everyone's running one way, why don't you run the other way? Maybe it's cheaper over there, cause no one's trying. I met someone who told me, "Well, give LinkedIn a go. This is where we are playing, a lot of coaches play in this point, but of course a hotel could play in it. A lot of your business is corporate contracts, you talk to a lot of EAs who book a lot of these events and things. They're all on LinkedIn. Why not give it a try?"

We initially started it. I initially invested as a business, as a hotel to try and grow the corporates contract side of the business. The first thing I learned was that LinkedIn best serves personal brand content as opposed to company content. It's much easier to build a personal brand on LinkedIn. It wasn't something I was trying to do at the time, but the coach was like, "No, you need to use Stanley Henry, the general manager of this hotel to push this brand."

That was the first time I actually realised, "Oh, this is a personal brand thing, not a hotel-branded thing." Whereas on Instagram, Facebook, of course you would run a hotel brand. I actually didn't realise it was personal brand until I started the process and it was all about how can we do things differently in this hotel to find business that otherwise we couldn't have got.

David Pembroke:

It sounds to me like you are a quick learner and you are a good listener and a good observer of trends and advice, and when you see things that work that you can move very quickly, how important do you think it is in the modern communication space to be curious and to be adaptive such that you can take advantage of these quick movements that we see in these emerging digital platforms?

Stanley Henry:

It's everything, actually. One of the first pieces of advice I give to everyone who's trying to get into a new platform for the first time is, "Start consuming." If you don't understand the platform and what's happening on there, you're never going to get it. The analogy I often use to a lot of people and whether or not it resonates, but the analogy I always use is sandwiches. I think of sandwiches in countries, if you go to every country, they have different cultures and a sandwich is still a sandwich, but it looks different in Japan to what it looks like in Australia to what it looks like in the Americas or UK. Everyone has their own form of a sandwich. It's the same thing with social media platforms. All the social media platforms are different countries and different cultures, and the content on there looks slightly different, it's still a video, but it looks slightly different on TikTok to what it looks like on LinkedIn to what it looks like on YouTube.

If you want to be on these platforms, you need to understand the culture there. That's for me is everything. If you're not part of it, you're never going to really be able to execute on it. Now, if you are a brand who doesn't have that time or doesn't have the interest, that's what agencies exist for, or people to hire out to.

But still, as someone who's trying to keep up to date with what's happening, my advice is to consume. But the problem there is where a lot of people get stuck is they don't do it with any intention. They just scroll, they just scroll along and let the algorithm do its thing. We talk about a team as scrolling with intention, having a time blocked out, I'm going in for a purpose and I'm going to scroll along. But every time I swipe I'm going to ask myself, "Why did I swipe? What was it about the piece of that video that made me do that?" Or when I stopped to read a post on LinkedIn, why did I click see more? What did they do that triggered my brain to make that thing happen?

Consume but with intention to make sure that you're actually learning from that experience and not just getting, as they say, lost in the death scroll.

David Pembroke:

Listen, today, fast-forward the tape to where we are today, 31 people helping to tell the stories of a number of brands that you're working with. Who are some of the clients that you're helping to solve their problems?

Stanley Henry:

We work with a range of clients from small businesses all the way to large corporates. Probably for this audience, probably the ones that you might recognise are things like Pizza Hut and Taco Bell, there is One New Zealand, which is Vodafone, rebranded to One New Zealand, so we work with them. We work with a band, the New Zealand's largest band called Six60 who are touring Australia at the moment. Then we work down with small personal brands who are one individual coaches. They might be coaches of whatever leadership coaches or business coaches through to, we have a Fortune 100 company in New York, Spectrum who are a large telco company, as well. A big broad range of people from single individuals through to big corporates who need a presence to fast-growing startups, well-funded startups who just need to get their message out as fast as possible.

David Pembroke:

What's a typical process that you have to onboard some of these clients because there's an enormous diversity from a Fortune 100 company all the way down to a sole trader, someone who might be getting started. But is there a commonality in the way that you think about telling stories for people?

Stanley Henry:

Absolutely. It doesn't matter if you're one person or you're Fortune 100 company, our process is pretty similar, there's obviously more work involved with a bigger company because there's more to tell.

The onboarding process for us is pretty fixed, it's about eight weeks for any client to come on board with us. The reason why that's so intense is that for us to really make content the right way, we really have to understand you, understand your audience and understand the message we're getting across.

The process is split up into four parts. Positioning is the first part of the strategy, that's essentially why you exist and who you want to talk to. To position you in the market, what's the message you're saying, "Why? What's the purpose of the business and who do you serve?"

And then, we get into campaign, which essentially how do we take that message to those people? It's the campaign, it's the big idea, it's the TV show, it's the big idea that we bring to life for the whole campaign.

And then we have channel, the channel is like the logistics, the nuts and the bolts, how many posts, how often, when does it go out? What platforms are we on? Is there an out of home campaign part to it? Where does it go? What are the things that we're going to put out? What are the pieces of content?

And then the last stage is prototyping, which is essentially taking all this strategy and start to develop the content series out because what we see on a piece of paper and what a client sees on a piece of paper don't always align. So we have this two-week period of alignment and prototyping of making content so that we're all in agreement with, we all think this is the right strategy, but we all see it the same way.

And then also it's like screen testing, how we got the right talent, have we got the right environments to make the content in? Because often some clients are like, "Look, I'll be the talent," we'll film them, they'll watch it and they're like, "I really shouldn't be the talent here. Let's find some other talent." It's a really good process to allow them to see that before you go and put it public.

And then once we get to the end of that, we've got to a point where we have a strategy, we know where we're going and we've got all the content that goes forward and then we can go live.

David Pembroke:

What about ongoing? Because obviously a lot of campaigns, they're not static and building those relationships with people, with customers, with stakeholders, with citizens, you really do need to have that enduring connection to build the trust and the confidence over time such people can get to know you. How do you sustain beyond that initial eight week period in terms of the creation, distribution, and obviously, the

evaluation of what's working and what's not working? Because often we all start these obviously with the best intention and the best ideas make decisions on the best available evidence, but we all make erroneous decisions along the way. How do you deal with those ongoing opportunities and challenges?

Stanley Henry:

Great question. We work long-term on a monthly retainer with clients and they can end that when they feel it is ready to end. But the way that we keep that relationship building with the client.

First of all, our account managers, their entire KPI is based on how many times they talk to their client each day. The point of that is that we are measuring the relationship. How good of a relationship do we have with that client to know everything we need to know about their concerns, what they have to achieve, what's their goals so that we can make sure as a team that we are doing what we need to do to fulfil that? Because sometimes, because as you'll know in the world of business, there's politics involved, and it's not always about results, sometimes it's just about we need to have things happen.

We need to make sure what does our client need to be successful inside their organisation? And they think so, we're always really close with them and we try to embed ourselves. We will have things where our clients are messaging all times of the night. They become friends with the client managers. That's the first bit.

But the second bit may be more important to what you're asking is how do we ensure that this campaign actually does end up succeeding ultimately? We have this process of agile content production where we're not precious, we'll kill our darlings. Just because we've had this piece of project that we made, if it doesn't work in which we can find out pretty quickly within a day or two if the video concept is working or not, we are very okay with killing that concept and moving on. Sometimes it needs a full kill, just completely take this offline and sometimes it just needs an evolution.

The way that we look at that is we put a piece of content out to what we all think is the best of our ability. We see how it performs, we read the data, we don't trick ourselves into and try to justify the data. We just say, "This is it. The data said this," people resonated or they didn't resonate. And if they didn't resonate, why not? What was missing from this and how do we do it? We'll come up in a hypothesis of, I think we need to change this part of the content, change it, and then go again. It's just this iterative process that until we find it. And clients will see it, it'll often start off slow as we are trying to work through it and then you'll catch it. And we obviously faster and faster as the business has been around because we know more and more tricks to try. But it's not uncommon for us to take a client from zero to a hundred thousand, followers that is, within a month or two. It's a very normal thing for our business.

We're very good at just every day trying something slightly different or just changing a little part of the content production process to get the algorithm to serve it to the people that we want it to serve to.

It's just an iterative process. It's no different to any agile coding or programming or manufacturing these days and lean models. It's the same process, but just take to a content production service.

David Pembroke:

What do you have to do then to succeed? What are the absolute fundamentals that you see consistently across the campaigns and programs that you're running that you must have to be successful.

Stanley Henry:

You know, you alluded to it earlier about storytelling. It's, it's that. There is only a few fundamental human truths in the world and storytelling concepts that you can really pull on, that are, if you dig deep enough, resonate like regardless of the person watching. Doesn't matter what language you speak, where you come from, what ethnicity, nothing, nothing matters, because there's some fundamental human truths and one of them is an example on our TikTok. On our company, TikTok, the story that we're telling there is boss versus employee and there's a fundamental human truth there between the power dynamic of, you know, superior

and subordinate, it could be mother and daughter, father and son. It could be, you know, boss versus employee, older brother, younger brother. There's a dynamic there that we all understand this power struggle that happens between two people and everyone gets that regardless where you come from and you can see that by our statistics that we have people, viewers from all over the world, people who don't even speak English, watching our videos. So if you can get to that fundamental human truth of the storytelling piece and then the layer that you add on to it is your brand and your brand message about that fundamental human truth, then you're able to then really succeed, and that that, that's it. The only real difference about that storytelling to going real viral is how quickly can you communicate that message on the platform that you're designing it for.

So as an example to tell that story on LinkedIn is very different to how you tell it on TikTok and very different how you tell in YouTube. And so usually in our testing phase, we know the stories, right but the way that we're communicating that message on that platform, we haven't quite got right. So we have to keep tweaking that till we get that message right. But the actual story doesn't change. And if you, but if you don't have the story, it doesn't matter how much tweaks you make to that piece of content, it's not gonna go. No one will understand it.

David Pembroke:

How do you make decisions around how much time and effort and energy you make in creating content for the company as opposed to the time that you dedicate to service the needs of your clients?

Stanley Henry:

You mean our own company versus the client's company?

David Pembroke

Yeah.

Stanley Henry:

Good question.

David Pembroke:

Because it takes a lot of time, effort, and energy to produce quality content.

Stanley Henry:

We get asked this a lot actually. To be fair, we just have a separate team that deals with content, internal content impression. It is not really any secret sauce. A lot of people look at Jony and think, "Oh, Jony's the brains behind everything," or me vice versa. But we're just talent at the end of the day. I'm obviously used more sparingly than Jony because I actually am the CEO of the company and actually do have to run it. They'll book me in my calendar, they'll say, "Stan, we need you for 20 minutes for this piece of content and we'll use it." But Joanie, her full-time job is to run the internal content. And she is, there's a full team. So we have five people dedicated to internal content and we've always had a big portion of our team dedicated to that.

A lot of people as we've grown this company, have said, "how are you sustaining this many people in the internal team?" And the realistic, the truth of it is that I just wasn't pulling profit out. My wife and I paid us a salary, all we needed to get by, we weren't really worried about how much money we're pulling it out at the beginning and we're reinvesting it into the right staff.

What I usually tell people is that you need a good dedicated team because soon as you give that team other client priorities, the clients come first. You can't let go of the client, they're paying the bills. If I give Jony client work she can't do internal content, she has to look after the client. Of course she does. They're the ones who



keep the lights on. We have a whole team dedicated servicing clients so that the team who's doing internal stuff, they're not getting distracted essentially.

For bigger businesses, it's a bit easier. You've got the revenue to support it. When you're a smaller business, it's a pretty tough thing. When I first hired Jony, she was purely internal and we were a lot smaller and nine people at the time. We had her and one other girl on the team who were full internal content creators, so it's two of our team of nine. So it's like a pretty big investment, but I guess it paid off is what I'm trying to say. I think it is important. I think you do need it. I think it's the bigger you get, obviously that percentage changes because there's only so much more people could do in the internal content team. So it doesn't scale up the same way. But I'd say that we'll probably get to a point if we're at a hundred staff, I reckon we'd still have 15 people in the internal team.

David Pembroke:

Well, clearly the benefits, if it wasn't working, you wouldn't keep doing it.

Stanley Henry:

Exactly.

David Pembroke:

You'll pay attention. But I'm interested also in the skills and the skills mix because something you said a little bit earlier, which I think resonates, is that you were listening very closely to the needs of your clients and you were helping them where they needed help. They were telling you the help that they needed, but you were then designing your agency and your services around meeting those particular needs. What does that look like now in terms of the skills of the people that you have there at The Attention Seeker?

Stanley Henry:

Now, internally in our team, because we have freelancers and contractors that use, but the internal people, which are obviously the skill sets we need the most which is why we've hired them internally.

Video both production, filming videographers and video editors are some of the most important people on the team. Copywriters. Copywriters are worth their weight in gold for all sorts of reasons. Show writers is a really new role that we have. We call it show writer, but essentially what it is, they write scripts and they can translate from strategic vision of a content idea, the campaign, into the actual briefs that the video team get. Essentially, the guys we hired are two comedians who just understand how to take an idea and turn it into script. They don't just make comedic ones, they can do all sorts of style, but they are comedians - so show writers. We have graphic design, and people who can do graphic design, guys who can do websites if needed and technical stuff. When I say that, I say that with a bit of an asterisk because it's not their full-time job, but when we need to do it for a campaign, we can do it. We've got guys who can do media buying if needed, if we need to place ads and do what we need to do.

From a creative and operational perspective, we've got that. But we also have, and probably our most important department, is the account management department. I think that a relationship with your client is the most important part of keeping clients happy rather than... We know that great results don't keep clients. We've learned that over and over again. There's plenty of clients that we've had grown from zero to 200,000 followers, a hundred million views within three months, and they've still left thinking, "We think we can do this better," because the relationship wasn't good enough. It doesn't matter that we got these exceptional results.

Our account management team, it's quite large, there's six in there now, and they're a very important part. We have a community management team, there's four girls on the community management team whose job is just to reply to every single comment, direct message, whatever it might be, understand how a brand interacts with other profiles online, as well. And then we have a strategy team, so there's two in the strategy team, and they're both ex agency, one's Nate, who's been in the game for 30 years; and then Connor, who's been in the

game for about 10 years now, who are really established strategists in their space, which is where everything starts.

David Pembroke:

Where to from here? It sounds like it was a bit of an accident to start with, but you've now turned it from an accident into a process and more than one person's paying you, so that's good. But where to from here? Where do you see The Attention Seeker moving to and how are you going to stay at the tip of the spear?

Stanley Henry:

Great question. Essentially, at the end of the day, we are going for global domination. I'm going for broke. It really is that.

A lot of my career was in Australia and my partner, as well. As you know with Australia, you've got quite good superannuation scheme. There's enough in our superannuation that we could retire on when we need to. We had pretty good careers, so there isn't any real need to worry about retirement at the moment. In New Zealand we have KiwiSaver, which is similar, so we're still contributing to that. We have this idea that our retirement's taken care of. I have 30 years essentially to mess this up. I have 30 years to just see what I can do. We really truly believe we're going to go for global domination, just do as much as we can and grow as big as we can. If it works, it's awesome. If it doesn't, well we learn and we had a good time along the way. That's first of all is our ambitions. They're not small by any standards.

As a company. We have a BHAG, or a big, hairy, audacious goal, which is 10 billion followers. That seems outrageous because there isn't 10 billion people in the world. However, we have a number of profiles and it's all our staff. Collectively as a whole, 10 billion followers across all the people and the profiles we have and all the platforms. It's such an outrageous number because we said to ourselves, "Well, let's make it a billion." And then we did the math and we said, "Do we think we could become a thousand-person organisation? And do we think we know how to build profiles up?" Like each person in our team having a million followers, do we really think we could do that? We're like, "Yeah," if we've got all these people working towards the same thing, of course, well that's a billion, so let's make it 10 billion because it seems scarier.

We've got 10 billion followers, which essentially enables us to do whatever we want whenever we want, that's our goal. But the way that we'll stay relevant there is that we're constantly dabbling our feet in all sorts. We're always trialing, we've got a campaign going at the moment on Twitter or X and Threads, Snapchat. We haven't quite fully cracked those, but we've got a couple team members who are push playing around and dabbling in it.

We've got a big emphasis on YouTube this year, which has been growing really well, a newsletter which is growing really well. We are very agnostic to the platforms like TikTok, Instagram, LinkedIn, doesn't matter. It's about the attention, where is it and where we're going for it. We're just constantly trying new things and playing around. And when we find out how to do it, well, now we just double down on that, potentially hire someone full time to take care of it. We have one person just their whole... Well, actually two people whose entire job is just our newsletter. Once we figure it out, we just double down.

Our goal is continue to dabble, continue to find the attention. Once we figure out how to do it, hire the right resources to continue to do it full time, separate them out of the client work, use all of that attention to drive more clients into the business and then ultimately take over the world.

David Pembroke:

Excellent. Well, listen, before I let you... Well, if you're going to take over the world, I better let you go. A big job. But before you take over the world, this podcast is really for people who work in government communication whose job it is to explain policy, programmes, services, regulation. At the end of the day, as I often say - people are people, whether you're working for the government or a big brand or a sporting team or whoever. There is a story to tell, and tell it well. What advice would you have to people who are working in

government departments and agencies who are seeking to be more successful in the way that they can do that?

Stanley Henry:

My answer here is not always one people want to hear, but the first thing I'd like to say to people is, "Don't think that people care what you have to say is important." I think if you have that mindset that people don't really care what I have to say, then, it's a little bit liberating and free actually now you can send back and go, "If they don't really care about what I have to say, what do they care about? What is it that they want to listen to and what is the story that they want to hear?" And then you can go out and find out, this cohort of people that I want to talk to, what are they listening to? What are they reading? What are they watching and why do they care and give their attention to that place? What is it about that story that's being told over there that they care about?

And then if you can just swallow your pride and realise that they don't care about you, but they care about this, well, how do I then take my story and interweave it with the things that they do care about? Then how do I hijack where their attention already is? That's not a trick or trying to trick them into it, but it's being genuine, it's genuinely thinking to them. They're the audience, you need them, not they need you. How do we find out what they really want to hear and listen and watch from a content perspective and then create our content to serve that?

As opposed to what a lot of people try to do with communication is, "I've got this really important thing I need to say and I'm going to say it to you and I'm going to make sure you listen." It's just not how the world works and we all know that because if we intuitively think about how we consume content, we don't really care if people have a message. We only care if we want to hear that message. The only reason we want to hear that message is if it aligns with some narrative that we have or some thing we want to buy into, which is why influencers have worked so well from an influencer marketing perspective much to a lot of people's dismay, but it's worked because they've had the attention and people have wanted to listen to these people and their narrative. Brands have been able to product placement or sponsored and being able to interweave their message in with the influencers message.

If I was in a government organisations, there are a lot of things that they need to tell people and people need to hear, but they say it from their perspective and they say it from what they think the people need to hear, but it's not what the people are currently consuming. That's how I would try and change it. A good example, depending on what side of the political space you lean on, but Jacinda Ardern here in New Zealand managed to do that really well. She understood what the audience that she was trying to talk to wanted, and she created her content to circumvent everything else and tap into that straightaway.

For a small little island nation like ours, with the following that she has on social media, she really shouldn't have that big social media. Just on Instagram, she has 1.6 million people follow her. And when you put that into perspective of... I mean, I'm pretty sure the Prime Minister of Australia right now doesn't even have close to that followership. But the reason she was able to do it is because she listened to the people that she was trying to speak to, found out what the stories that they were listening to and what they wanted to hear, and she found a way to insert her narrative into the same story.

I guess, stop thinking that people care what you have to say. Don't take that the wrong way, take that as in that's really empowering because now what I can do is focus on what they actually want to listen to and they actually want to hear, and I can find a way how my story serves that story. If I can do that, people will listen and actually, you'll get a better outcome from it because they won't see it as a sales trick because government is still trying to sell at the end of the day, they're trying to sell their policies and their way of things, but you have to sell. But if you weave your story into a narrative they're already listening to, you can have a much better chance of getting them to actually listen to that story. Especially in politics where a big portion of the population just doesn't care for political stories a lot of the time. There's a big contingent to people who just

don't listen, especially young people, they're just not listening to the way that they maybe should or people disenfranchised.

I think there's lots of ways that you can get into that. It's just realising that you've got to stop, realise that what do they want? How do I serve the audience, not serve my needs?

David Pembroke:

Wonderful advice. Wonderful advice. There you go. Consider yourselves well told by a man who knows how to tell a story. Listen, everybody go and have a look at The Attention Seeker, spend a bit of time on their social media and look at the way that they are going about their business because there is so much that we can learn from them. As you heard from Stanley there, he is always learning, he is always watching, and his team is watching and learning and testing and trying different ways. But I think that last bit of advice, put yourself in the shoes of the people who you are trying to influence and engage and tell the story in the way that they would like it to be told, in the channels, at the times of their choosing. Fantastic advice.

Stanley, the very best of luck with global domination and 10 billion followers, we will be watching with interest. Congratulations on all your success and all the very best to you and the rest of the team there at The Attention Seeker.

Stanley Henry:

Thank you so much, David. Thanks for having me on the podcast. Really enjoyed it and appreciate it.

David Pembroke:

Thank you very much, and thanks to you, the audience, for coming back once again. A rating or a review, a five star rating, thanks very much. If you could, it does help the programme to be found. And each week, or every fortnight, I should say, we are bringing interesting people who are teaching you all about the best ways to communicate with your citizens and your stakeholders, the ones who are helping you to understand what is that policy, that programme, that service, that regulation. There's so much in the conversation that we had with Stanley today that you can take away and you can apply to your work every day. Best of luck with that.

Really delighted that you are back once again, a big thanks to the content group team once again for putting the programme together. My name is David Pembroke. We'll be back in a fortnight's time. But for the moment, it's bye for now.

Voiceover:

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